

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed November 16, 2005 has been received and the Examiner's comments carefully reviewed. Claims 1 and 13 have been amended. Claims 15-19 have been added. No new subject matter has been added. Claims 1-19 are currently pending. Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

I. The Examiner rejected claims 1-14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Welch et al. (U.S. Patent 5,218,519) in view of Harker (U.S. Patent 6,823,475). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, but have amended claims 1 and 13 to advance this application to allowance. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the original subject matter in a continuing application.

A. Claims 1-7

Claim 1 recites a patch panel module including a one-piece housing having a generally L-shaped construction. A module card is attached to the housing by a snap-fit connection.

Welch does not disclose a housing having a generally L-shaped construction. Welch instead discloses an I-shaped board retaining clip 10 that connects to a circuit board 60. Harker is relied upon to make up for the deficiencies of Welch. Harker discloses a processor module 2 having an L-shaped plate 3. The L-shaped plate 3 carries a motherboard 11 that is mounted immediately behind a front panel 12 of the module 2.

Harker does not disclose a one-piece housing, as characterized in claim 1. Claim 1 requires a housing having an L-shape, and having a front plate. The L-shaped housing, including the front plate, is a one-piece housing. The L-shaped plate 3 and the front panel 12 of the Harker module 2 are not a single piece. Rather, FIG. 2 of Harker shows that the plate 3 and front panel 12 are separate components mounted in relation to one another to make up the "housing" of the module 2. Accordingly, combining the L-shaped side plate 3

of Harker with the I-shaped clip 10 of Welch does not result in a one-piece housing, as Harker teaches that the plate 3 and front plate are separate components.

At least because neither Welch nor Harker teaches or suggests a one-piece housing, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1, and dependent claims 2-7, are patentable.

B. Claims 8-12

Claim 8 recites a patch panel module having a housing including a face plate and a housing side. The module also includes a module card. The module card is secured to the housing by retaining structure. The retaining structure includes a flexible latch formed on the housing side, and a hole formed in the module card.

The Examiner notes that Welch does not disclose a patch panel module having a housing including a face plate and a housing side. Harker is relied upon to make up for the deficiencies of Welch.

Modifying Welch to include the L-shaped plate 3 of Harker still does not meet each and every structural limitation recited in claim 8. Claim 8 requires there to be a flexible latch formed on the housing side. Harker does not teach or suggest a flexible latch formed on the plate 3. The Examiner asserts that Welch discloses a flexible tab 22 that provides a snap-fit connection with a printed circuit board 60; however, the flexible tab 22 is formed on the back side of the I-shaped clip 10 (i.e., the back side of the "face plate"), not on a perpendicular housing side. (Applicants note that the bosses 28, 30 of Welch are not flexible, as required by claim 8; accordingly, it is the tabs 22, 24 that must be formed on the housing side.)

Neither Welch nor Harker teach or suggest placing a flexible latch on a housing side for engagement with a hole in printed circuit board. Accordingly, any motivation to place the tabs 22 of Welch on the L-shaped plate 3 of Harker can only be derived from Applicants' own specification, and based upon impermissible hindsight reconstruction.

At least for this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 8, and dependent claims 9-12 are patentable.

C. Claims 13-14

Claim 13 recites a method of assembling a patch panel module, including providing a one-piece housing, and pressing a module card and the housing toward one another to interconnect a latch of the housing with a hole of the card. Neither Welch nor Harker disclose a one-piece housing. At least for similar reasons as discussed with regards to claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 13, and dependent claim 14 are patentable.

II. The Examiner rejected claims 4-5 and 10-11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Welch et al. (U.S. Patent 5,218,519) in view of Harker (U.S. Patent 6,823,475), and further in view of Fritz (U.S. Patent 6,707,686). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 4-5 depend upon claim 1. Claims 10-11 depend upon claim 8. At least for the reasons discussed above with regards to independent claims 1 and 8, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 4-5 and 10-11 are patentable.

New Claims 15-19

Support for new claims 15-19 is found in the specification, for example, on pages 9-10, lines 26-1, and in Figures 11-12 and 15-16.

New claims 15-17 depend upon claim 13. New claim 18 depends upon claim 1. New claim 19 depends upon claim 8. At least for the reasons discussed above with regards to independent claims 1, 8, and 13, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 15-19 are patentable.

SUMMARY

It is respectfully submitted that each of the presently pending claims (claims 1-19) is in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is requested. The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the below-listed telephone number if it is believed that prosecution of this application may be assisted thereby.


Although certain arguments regarding patentability are set forth herein, there may be other arguments and reasons why the claimed invention is patentably distinct. Applicants reserve the right to raise these arguments in the future.



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Respectfully submitted,

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